

Blue and Yellow

by NormanReedus

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Summary: Life wasn't ever easy for me. I was the black sheep of the family, no one could ever be as great as my brother especially in our parents eyes. When accidents and tragedy strikes, our parents put the meaning of being here in perspective. I wasn't ever wanted, I was the blame for everything. I was a failure and a mistake. Through it all, my best friend Tim was there. Tim/OC

## 1. Chapter 1

Pre-season two-a-days were always rough. Only three weeks before the season starts, the team and I were on the field at 6 AM sharp, and then back on it after school. This year was going to be different for all of us, I felt it several times. My brother was a senior and looking to be signed with Notre Dame, I was a sophomore with colleges already tailing me. I couldn't be more proud of my brother, he was an All-American boy; well-rounded, grounded and very supportive of me.

Growing up and to this day, I had always been the black sheep of the family. I wished every night that our parents had at least a sixteenth of love for me as they had a whole lot of love for my brotherâ€”though, not everyone is that fortunate. I tried my hardest each day to be more like him, but my parents couldn't ever relish the fact that I wasn't ever going to be him. I had to accept the fact long ago that I wasn't ever going to amount to anything in their eyes.

Monday's were always the hardest day of the week, especially having to get up from a long night. Jason knocked on my door, then opened it. I sat on my bed and tied my cleats. I grabbed my Dillon Panthers t-shirt and put it over my camisole. "I'm ready for these two-a-days to end." I groaned as I stood up and tightened my football pants. Jason chuckled and shook his head.

"It will all be over before you know it, Lil' Bit." He said wrapping

an arm around my neck and kissing my head. "You almost ready? I got our gear in the Jeep."

"Yeah, I got everything. I'll braid my hair on the way there."

"Alright, let's go." He said with a smile. I nodded and followed him out my room and out the house. We got in the Jeep and headed towards the school. I began braiding my hair as we both jammed out to our daily Def Leppard. "You think I'll be good at Notre Dame?"

"Bubba, I think you will be a huge asset to Notre Dame." I replied looking over at him, "Never question your ability to excel, because I know you will. In anything you decide to do, you will excel, always."

"Thank you Lil' Bit. What you just said warms my heart." He said with a smile. I rolled my eyes and chuckled. We pulled into the field and got out, I grabbed my helmet, shoulder pads and jersey and waited for Jason. Once he was by my side, we made our way to the field. For the first time, we were the first ones here, along with Coach Taylor.

My phone rang abruptly, I grabbed it out of my gym bag and saw it was Tim. I pressed send then put it to my ear. "Lil' Bit?"

"Yeah, Tim where are you?" I asked watching as my teammates walked on the field.

"I'm coming. Be there soon, tell Coach I had truck problems."

"Alright, bye Riggers." I said before I hung up. "Coach, Tim is having truck problems."

He furrowed his eyebrows and gave me a look, then nodded. "Alright men and lady, let's start with warm ups. Lil' Bit start us off."

I nodded and slid my back plate and chest plate on, then my jersey. I walked to the formation and began calling out exercises. Thirty minutes into the exercises, Tim walks on the field. I sighed and shook my head, as he gave me a prominent nod as he stood beside me. I called out more exercises, Tim fell in with us. Once we were finished, we started working on new plays for the upcoming game with Westerby. News reporters were filing in to talk to the team and Coach Taylor about the game against Westerby Friday night.

"Lil Bit, I need you to talk to the reporters, okay? They are wanting to talk to you." Coach Taylor said as he and Jason walked back over to us. I furrowed my eyebrows but nodded.

"Okay Coach." I said before I took my helmet off and walked to the camera crew. I smiled and shook the hand of the reporter, John Griesheim. "I'm Johnna Street, also known as Lil' Bit to the team and those who are close to me."

"Good to meet you, I'm John, please have a seat." He said with a smile. I nodded and sat down in the chair. "So, tell us about yourself. What do you do for the team, how long, how old and what grade are you in?"

"I'm Johnna Street, little sister of Jason Street. I'm a sophomore, I'm 16 and I have three jobs on the team. I am the kicker, wide receiver, and I'm a halfback or in laments terms, a tailback, which for those that don't know, I stand behind the fullback, which stands behind the quarterback. I've been playing football ever since I was little, I grew up with half these guys and they are what you call family."

"You are busy on the field then, I've seen you in several interviews for ESPN, Texas Football, and even Sports Illustrated; how are the recruiters? I know you are top three best kickers of all time as well as tailback and wide receiver. You have changed a lot of peoples perspective of what is supposed to be a 'male sport'. My daughter is a big fan of yoursâ€"she has your spreads all in her room."

"Aw that's amazing, tell her thank you for me. The recruiters are hot and heavy, top three? Are you kidding me? That's news to me, I surely didn't know that. About the changing the perspective, it's great to meet women that wants to play football. I love it, football is my life. The women that I meet are amazing, they all say they look up to me, they all call me a celebrity, but I'm not. I play football, football is a hard sport to conquer. It's a lot more work than what you think."

"So, do you think you are a role model for women?"

"I would hope that I am. I mean, my whole thing is that, if you want it then you do whatever you want to get it. I support anyone who follows their dreams. I hope that I see more women in football."

"That's amazing. I'll even admit, my daughter wants to be a football player. That's all because of you."

"I appreciate that. And when she gets older and wants to pursue football, please let her. I know it's a dangerous sport, there are several injuries you can receive, but that's with any sport. Tell her that when she wants to start learning the game, the basics and the plays to come to me and I'll be happy to help her understand the game."

"I will, she will love that. So, Friday night with Westerby, what do you think the outcome will be?" He wondered, I bit my lip and sighed.

"Not to toot our horns, but I think we'll take that W home. Westerby is a good team, they're rough as hell though. If I remember correctly, one of the offensive linemen ended up putting a Larabee player out for good. I watched the game play and it was a hard hit, harder hits I've ever seen."

"I remember that game, they are very rough and it seems like they have the ref's favor."

"My thoughts exactly, but like I said, I think we'll take the W. Wait, not think, I know we'll take the W. When it gets down to the nitty gritty, the guys and I will put a stop to every one of them."

"That's what I'm talking about." He said with a smile, "Well good

luck Friday, I know yal will do great."

"Thank you sir, yal have a good day." I said as I got up and walked back to the team. We did a few more plays and lasted until 7:30. After practice, the team went into the field house and showered off. I changed quickly and met up with Tim, who was waiting at my locker.

"Lil' Bit you have to look in my locker." He said with a smile. I furrowed my eyebrows and tilted my head.

"Why?" I asked with a small chuckle. He bent down and picked me up and walked me over to his locker. He opened the locker, I gasped at the pictures of me from the Sports Illustrated magazine. "Timbo, what the hell is this?"

"Got to pray to my favorite player." He said with a smile, I rolled my eyes and shook my head. "I think this woman is amazing. MY favorite woman ever. Can I have your autograph?"

I couldn't help but to laugh as he took out a black Sharpie and handed it to me. I shook my head and took the cap off the Sharpie and scribbled my name over the jersey. I capped the Sharpie and looked back at Tim, "All set Timbo."

He smiled, "Good, so when you get drafted I can brag about you."

I rolled my eyes, "I won't get drafted, Tim. There have been so many spectators that have said a girl will never play in the NFL. So my dream has ended as of when I finish college."

"I doubt that, Lil' Bit. You are the best and everyone knows it, all of Texas knows it." He retorted, "Never doubt your ability, Lil' Bit. You're my lucky number 13; I wear your number on my cheeks because I know you have it in you. If Smash or I can't carry it out for the Panthers, you will."

"This conversation is so weird, what has happened to Tim Riggins?" I asked quizzically, making him chortle.

"This is him baby." He said with a wink. I shook my head and hit his stomach with my fist, "Come on, let's go."

"To class Tim, because your grades are slipping."

He groaned but complied. He threw his arm over my shoulders and bent down to kiss my head. We walked out of the field house and towards the school. After school began, everything was on edge. There were so many news crew members walking through the halls mixing amongst the student body.

Lunch time came, which wasn't anything new. The school was segregated at lunch, which gave the news crew more power the press the racial issue, which wasn't anything to it. Tim, Jason, Tyra, Lyla, and I were at the table talking amongst the each of us. I felt a sharp pain on my side, I winced and excused myself from the table. Quickly, I ran towards the bathroom. Once I was in the bathroom, I walked to the mirror and lifted my shirt and turned to my side. I had a nasty bruise forming; it was a dark purple and black.

Earlier at practice, Oran ran into me whole-heartedly without hesitation. I sighed and let my shirt fall, I walked out the bathroom and headed towards the nurse. As I went into the nurse's office, she panicked as I showed her my side. She gave me an ice wrap, ibuprofen then gave me an excuse.

By the time school was over, the pain subsided. I walked to the field house alone and walked to bench. I sighed and laid back on the bench, stretching my side. I closed my eyes and sighed heavily. "Lil' Bit you okay?"

"Oran got me good this morning, Coach." I said looking up at him. His eyebrows furrowed in question. I lifted my shirt up and watched his face scramble in pain. He leaned forward and ran his finger lightly over the bruise.

"That looks painful." He said looking at me, I nodded and grimaced.

"It hurts, I went to the nurse and she gave me an ice wrap swelling and ibuprofen for pain. I'll be fine by practice though."

"He hit you pretty hard and it wasn't a proper contact hit either." Coach said pulling me to sit up. "I just want to tell you that I am very proud of you. I know things are hard between you and your parents, but you can always count on me being there for you."

"I appreciate it Coach, I really do." I started, "You've cared more about me than what they ever have. They put all their time and money in Jason; Jason hates it and always had. I just wish they had a tenth of the love for me as they do for him. I've thought about emancipating myself from themâ€"Jason even thought it was a good idea."

"You work too hard to not be appreciated by them. You have a full time job, you go to school and you are a straight A student. You are an amazing football player, and I am so fortunate to have you on my team, playing for me."

I smiled sadly, "Thank you Coach. I try my hardest to please everyone, but some people you just can't please. I stay out the way of my parents. I pay rent to live in the pool house; I wash my own clothes, I cook my own food. I know that in the back of my mind that I was never wanted. I'm the Mistake Street."

"You are not a mistake, no matter how many times you have been told or how many times you tell yourself that. You were put here on this Earth for a reason. You are an outstanding young woman, one of the best that I've had the privilege of knowing. I appreciate everything you have done and do for me."

"And I appreciate you looking out for me like you do, Coach. It means a lot, really. For as long as I play, I will give you two-hundred percent, I will give the team two-hundred percent."

"I know you will, Lil' Bit. I put my trust, faith all in you." He said as the team filled in the field house. He patted my back and kissed my head before he walked out and in his office. Oran looked over at me and bit his lip.

"Let me see your side." He said as he walked up to me. I shook my head as Tim and Jason walked to us.

"I'm fine, Or." I said, "It was a hit, I took it. It's football, we get hurt."

"I want to see it." He said peering down at me. I sighed and stood up, holding my shirt up. He gasped and looked at me, almost with tears in his eyes. "I am so sorry Lil' Bit."

"I'm fine, Or, I promise."

"What the hell happened?" Jason asked looking at my side.

"I did this and I am sorry." Or whispered, "I hit her wrong this morning."

"Oran it's okay. Remember what I said, this is football."

"But it looks so awful, Lil' Bit." Oran said as he sat down. I looked up at Tim, who looked like he could kill. I reached up and snaked my arm through his.

"It hurts a little, but I'm alright."

"If you need anything, I will get it for you." Oran said hugging me gently. I chuckled and kissed his cheek.

"I appreciate it, Or. I'm alright though."

He nodded and kissed my head before he walked to his locker. Oran was a big teddy bear to me, though he was ruthless to everyone else. He reminded me of Tim in a lot of ways. Minutes later, practice started, and thank god, we took an easy practice. We did practice drills, then ran the bleachers then done zig-zags.

"Hey Lil' Bit, Lyla and I are going out for supper tonight. Do you have any plans?" Jason asked as he caught up to me. I looked up at him and shook my head. "You working tonight?"

"No, I'm off. I'm probably going to go and take an ice bath." I said with a small smile. He chuckled and nodded, "I'll get Tim to drop me off, okay?"

"You sure?" He asked, I nodded and pulled his head down and kissed his cheek.

"Yes, go." I said pushing him in front of me. He chuckled and walked to the Jeep. I stopped and saw Tim walking up towards me. "Will you give me a ride home and eat with me tonight?"

"Yeah, but I got to stop by the house first, though okay?"

"Okay." I said with a smile. He wrapped his arm around my shoulders and kissed my head as we walked to his truck. After we got in, he started the truck up and headed towards his house. We pulled up to his house only minutes later—we went inside just as Billy was fixing to leave.

"Lil' Bit you doing okay?" Billy asked after he hugged me. I nodded

and smiled.

"Can't complain really." I said, "How's work?"

"It's good, I like working at night." He explained, handing me a beer. I smiled and thanked him then opened it. After taking a swig, Tim come back in to view washed and cleaned.

"I know how night shift is. I like it a lot better because I know 99.9% of the time, Tim is up and I can bug him while I'm not doing anything."

He and Billy both laughed, "I bet Tyra enjoys coming in second to Lil' Bit."

"Tyra doesn't even matter when it comes to Lil' Bit. No one matters." Tim said pointedly, looking at Billy. He grabbed a beer and popped the top off. "You ready, Bit?"

I nodded and smiled, then gave Billy another hug. Tim and I left his and made our way to mine. He unlocked the door and walked in the house and set the beer on the coffee table before he walked back out and grabbed my helmet and jersey along with my pants. I took a quick shower and got dressed in a pair of cotton shorts and a Dillon t-shirt.

When I walked in the living room part, he was sitting there watching Remember the Titans. I smiled and walked to him, taking a seat beside him on the couch. He handed me a bag of ice to put over my side. I laid my head on his shoulder and focused on the movie.

"Strong side." I said after the movie went off.

"Left side." Tim said making me smile widely.

"What do you want for supper?" I asked sitting up. He stopped me and pulled me back down.

"I'll cook. What do you want?"

"Whatever you want, Timbo." I said looking over at him, "You know what would be good though? One of those Tim Riggins burgers."

"Anything you want." He said kissing my forehead. He got up and walked into the kitchen. He washed his hands and took the hamburger meat out of the refrigerator and started mixing how he mixed it. I laid on the couch and flipped the TV to Boy Meets World. He simply chuckled as I spoke the lines of the episode. "You love this show way too much."

"You always watch it with me. It's either this or freaking Oprah, I opt Boy Meets World."

"Hey, Oprah is the shit."

I rolled my eyes, "If you say so, Timbo. If you say so."

"Lil' Bit this is a fight you're going to lose."

"Timothy Riggins I can take you any day, any time. Fact." I said with a smile batting my eyelashes. He chortled but nodded.

"Whatever you say Lil' Bit."

"I do say it, and I will always say it." I said as I stood up and made my way to the kitchen. I walked up behind him and wrapped my arms around his waist, then laid my head in the middle of his back. "One day, Tim Riggins, you will make the perfect girl over the moon happy. You are so domestic, I love it."

He chuckled, "The perfect girl, doesn't want anything to do with me that way."

"How do you know?" I asked looking up at him, he looked over his shoulder and peered down.

"Because I am a fuck up in that way." I rolled my eyes and shook my head.

"You're a man-whore, Timbo. If there is anyone that can't handle your past then they don't need to be in your future. You deserve the best, like always. You have a few setbacks with your choice of tail, but as the months and years pass by, you will realize you can do so much better than those Rally girls and Tyra. You will realize that you deserve better."

"Why are you so good to me?"

"Because I love you Tim, you're my best friend, my backbone." I paused, "My faith is in you and it will always be in you. You are not as dumb as everyone thinks you are, I know that's a fact. You are an amazing man, Tim, I just wish you can see what I see when I look at you."

He turned in my arms and wrapped his arms around me tightly. I closed my eyes and breathed in his scent; Old Spice and beer, it was my favorite smell. He laid his head on mine and sighed, "My love for you will never change, no matter what happens. You're my number one girl, my One-Three, my heart and the only girl I will ever love whole-heartedly."

"You're my person, Timbo."

"You're my person, Lil' Bit." He replied with a whisper and a lingering kiss on my hair. "Please don't ever hate me, it would kill me."

"Never, I promise." I whispered, squeezing my hold tighter. I looked up at him and smiled smally at him. He leaned down and pressed his lips to mine a sweet kiss, then laid his forehead to mine. "You know me better than anyone, except for Jason, but still. You know it takes a lot for me to not like someone. You know there are two people I could never hate and that's you two."

"I don't deserve half of what you do give me." He muttered as his eyes were closed.

"You deserve that and more." I replied, kissing him once more before I walked to the couch. Since Remember the Titans went off, I quickly



grabbed the next movie another favorite, Hocus Pocus. He groaned playfully as he brought our burgers over. He walked back and grabbed two beers, then sat beside me.

"Hocus Pocus, really Bit?"

I nodded and smiled as I took a bite into my burger. I groaned, savoring the flavor. "Oh god, Tim. These are orgasmic, and yes, really."

"You are something else, Lil' Bit." He said with a chuckle. I giggled and shrugged, leaning over and kissing his cheek. He smiled and winked before I turned back to the TV. After we finished eating, we ended up laying in my bedâ€"talking about any and everything. Though, I couldn't help but to smile as we fell asleep tangled in each other.

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*Tuesday\*\***

"Lil' Bit, I want you to work with Saracen today, okay? Make sure he remembers how to throw and run plays." Coach Taylor said as he walked up to me as I walked onto the field. I chuckled and nodded, then grabbed my helmet and slid it over my head. I jogged over to Matt and smiled.

"Let's throw the ball and run some plays, okay?" I suggested to him. He smiled and nodded. "So, tell me, which Rally girl do you have your eye on?"

"She-she's not really a Rally girl. She dances though." He sputtered out, making me smile even more. "She's beautiful, but way out of my league."

"Why do guys always think they're not good enough for a woman?" I asked as I put my gloves on.

"Because she's Coach Taylor's daughter." He deadpanned.

"Aw, Matty. Julie is an amazing girl; very down to earth." I said handing the ball to him. "Run the Chop Seven Turn 4."

"Okay." He said, getting into position. "Down, set, hut! Hut!" He called as I took down the field, going thirty yards out, as I turned the ball flew in the air towards me. With ease, I caught the ball and smiled.

"Criticism will be your best friend, Seven. When you snap, you have five seconds to get to where you're going. Within those five seconds you have to look at your options, you have to watch your coverage. Within those five seconds you have to watch your ass along with your teams' runners. Once you set your gauge, then it's go time from there."

"Okay, th-thank you." He said with a smile. Several plays later, practice was over. Coach Taylor walked up beside me, thanking me for talking Matt down some. When Jason leaves for college, Matt has some big shoes he has to fill.

"Coach you know I have no problem working with Matt." I said with a smile. He nodded and grinned and kissed my head.

"So, what's going on with you and Riggins?"

"Nothing, he's my best friend, Coach. He may be rough on the outside and is an alcoholic, but he's an amazing guy. I'm proud of him."

"I know you are, and I wish that he would open his eyes and see the opportunity that is at his front door. He can go so far with football."

"Oh, I know. He doesn't think he's good enough for college, but I instill in him that he is." I explained, "I want him to excel, I want him to follow any dreams he does have. If those are in college playing ball, then I want him to follow them. If it is in Dillon then I want him to stay and follow them. He's a damn good mechanic, he's a damn good fullback. His options are endless."

"You have a lot of faith in him, don't you?" Coach Taylor asked as he looked down at me.

"Coach, honestly, I do. I see the good and the better quality in him than anyone else. There is no one other than Billy that supports him and sometimes Billy drives him to drinking. My thing is, is instead of worrying about what you're going to wear tomorrow, or what college you're going to in a few years, just worry about living day to day."

"I like that, Lil' Bit. That's pretty amazing advice and I agree with you."

"Look at Smash. I love him to death but he is acting as if he is the only one who ever was being looked at by a scout. He thinks he's the only one that has ever been wanted on a college team, but he's not and he needs to realize that if you can run twenty to thirty yards under a certain amount of time you're going to be looked at. There has been several guys that's had scouts looking at them for that exact reason, just like him, because he's fast."

"He is a cocky one, though." He added, as I nodded.

"Oh, I agree, Coach. Smash is very cocky, but he has the right intentions. I just hope his mouth won't over load his ass when he does talk to the recruiters." I said with a small laugh. Coach Taylor nodded and agreed.

"Well go on, tell the special team to run your plays. Tell the first team to come off and take a break."

"Yes sir." I said before I walked back to the groups of guys, "Alright special team on the field, first team take a break." The two groups dispersed, leaving the special team on the field as the first team took the bench. "Five minute break, then we're doing up-downs."

"Lil' Bit all authoritative, I don't think 'The Smash' likes that."

I rolled my eyes, "I don't give a rat's ass what 'The Smash' likes or don't likes, okay? Leave the third person for Literature, alright?" I growled, "Like I said before we had that little bump in the road. Up-downs in four minutes and thirteen seconds."

I turned and sat between Tim and Oran, watching Matt and the special team run plays. I couldn't get frustrated with Matt because he was QB2 and still very wet behind the ears. I stood up and walked on the field, grabbing him up off the ground. "Listen to me, you have five second frame to hit your four steps. You have got to open your eyes Matt or they'll all gun for you."

"O-okay. Do I need to step differently?" He wondered shyly. "Will you show me the proper way?"

"Of course." I said with a smile. "Alright special team, I'm going to show Matt how to step. If any of yal tackle me while I do this, you will run the bleachers until you pass out. Understand?"

"Yes ma'am." The team said, I grinned.

"Perfect!" I exclaimed, taking the ball and handing it to Brad Sawyer. The offense huddled together, Matt stood beside me. "We're going to do the Blue 3 cross 5 Chop 6. Ready?"

"Break!" The team yelled. I smiled and got into place. "Blue twenty-two, set hut! Hut!" I grabbed the ball and walked back four steps. Julian Brady ran out, ready to receive the ball. "Count to four, look at your coverage and throw." I said to Matt as I threw a beautiful spiral. In the matter of seconds, the ball was in Julian's hands and he was in the end-zone.

"Thatâ€¦ that was great Johnna." He stuttered, I smiled and thanked him.

"You try it."

"It's a tough play."

"And you're a QB. Get your ass in gear and execute the play, Saracen."

"Yes ma'am." He said as if I stole his favorite toy. He got in the huddle and called the play. I smiled watching Matt execute the play.

"That's it, Matt. You did it." I said patting his helmet. "Keep on and you'll carry the team if need be."

"Thank you Lil' Bit."

"Not a problem at all." I said before I walked to the bench. "Alright guys, time for Smash's favorite exerciseâ€"up-downs. Six call them out."

The guys groaned which made me laugh loudly. We all got in formation and started the up-downs in fives all the way to twenty. As soon as we were finished, the team along with the special team ran the field before we got on our knees to listen to Coach.

"Alright team, we're almost there. There is not a doubt in my mind that that W will be ours. If we keep working like we've been then they won't be able to touch us. Special team, yal are looking great out there, and before this season is over, each one of you will play in the games. I promise you that." Coach Taylor spoke, "Now everyone bow your heads, for a prayer."

I grabbed Tim and Jason's hand then bowed my head, "Lord, Heavenly Father, thank you for giving these men and woman the stamina to do what they do. You have graced me with the best and I thank God for it every day. This team is what family is all about, it's not just about one it's about all. Please keep your arms around each of us while we are gearing up for the Friday night. In your name we pray, Amen. Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!"

"Say what?" I called out, "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!" We chanted and stood, holding our helmets in the air all touching, "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!" I couldn't help but to smile, "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!"

"Who are we?" I called out.

"The Panthers!"

"What are we going to do Friday?" I asked loudly.

"Win!" The team and Coaches called out loudly. I smiled as we dispersed. Tim, Jason, Oran and I walked off the field and to the field house together. After I took a quick shower, the guys followed in and took theirs. As soon as everyone finished, Jason and Tim decided that we had to get ready for the pep rally. I hated pep rally's with a passion.

Jason, Tim and I headed back to the Street abode. Tim and I went back to the pool house and got dressed in our 'nice' Panther shirts, something that we always wore to the tight knit uppity rally's. "Why do we have to go?" I asked as I walked into the living room.

"Because everyone needs to see the winners." Jason said with a grin. I rolled my eyes and sat on the couch beside Tim, who was watching a late recording of Oprah.

"They get on my nerves. Too much pep for me. All the fakeness comes out in one night, it's too much for me." I started, "You'll be with Lyla, Tim will be with Tyra, and I'll be there like sore ass thumb."

"You won't be alone."

"Yeah right, because you know just like I do." I growled lightly. "I can't even dress up nicely. I'll be the only girl there dressed like you stinking pigs."

"You are the girliest girl I know, you just play football." Jason said with Tim agreeing.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." I said before I looked at the time. We had thirty minutes before we had to get there. "I need my jacket."

"Check on your bed." Tim said as I got up and walked towards my room. I smiled and saw the jacket. Everything I had was specially made, I was a Tinker Bell compared to the various Hook's and Peter Pan's. I slid my jacket on and walked back into the living room.

"Lil' Bit you're riding with Tim, I'm gonna take Lyla home tonight."

"Okay. Come on Timbo, let's go show your pale face off."

"I'm not pale!" He exclaimed standing up, towering over me.

"Fine, come on Ashton Kutcher." I said with a grin. He glared playfully before he grinned. He wrapped his arms around me and picked me up, throwing me over his shoulder. Jason was bringing up the rear in a fit of giggles. "It's not funny Six."

"It is, Lil' Bit, it really is." He said laughing loudly. I rolled my eyes and submitted myself, laying on Tim's shoulder not even putting up a fight. Before I knew it, we were trailing Jason to the pep rally.

"Lil' Bit you know I won't leave you tonight, right?"

"You will, but it's okay. Tyra is your girlfriend." I said with a reassuring smile. "Are you ready for Friday?"

"Yeah."

"Don't lie. I know how you get."

"I want to show Coach that I can live up to his expectations." He admitted, I looked over at him and grabbed his hand.

"Word of advice Timbo, stop coming to practice hung-over. Show Coach you actually care about the team and him."

"You think it will work?"

"Yes I do, and you know I would never lie to you." I replied as we pulled into Buddy Garrity's dealership. He and I got out the truck and made our way in the building. The pep rally started, I couldn't have cared less about being here. Things like this weren't my scene.

After Coach talked to the community, the players were called up to the stage. One by one, each player got up there. I was last, luckily for me. I walked on the stage, hearing several roars and cheers. I smiled and waved, then stood beside Tim and Jason.

"I just want to say something about this young lady right here, Lil' Bit come here." Coach Taylor said, I furrowed my eyebrows and stepped to him. He wrapped his arm around my shoulders and smiled, "This young lady right here is Johnna Street."

"Lil' Bit!" Tim, Jason and Oran yelled out with a smile; roars filled the room once more.

"She is our Lil' Bit. I've had the honor of watching her grow up, for as long as I have known her, she was always about football. She

wanted to fit in with her brother, her best friend Tim, and the guys she grew up with. She puts in a lot of muscle and hard work for this team. She has three different jobs with the Panthers and she executes each really well. I am proud to be her coachâ€”she brings positivity and joy to the team. Thank you for being the person you are, Lil' Bit."

"Thank you Coach." I said hugging him tightly.

"I want to give an award to Johnna Street. The last two years you've been on varsity, you have excelled in everything. I never hear any back talk, there is no back lash. You are the glue of this team. You keep everyone in their own skinâ€”the guys and I want to present to you this necklace. You are the Lady Panther, number thirteen, and you will bring the Panthers to victory."

"Wait, what?" I asked full of confusion. The whole room laughed, I felt a cold metal against my chest. I looked down and saw a Panthers P with a tiara on it. Tears welled into my eyes, the thoughts of these guys were beyond belief.

"Speech!" I heard being yelled out.

"I just want to say thank you Coach Taylor, Coach McGill, and my team members for this. Without yal I couldn't be hereâ€”I wouldn't be here. I come into this looking for family, yarning for a little extra than what I usually get." I paused, the tears slipped out my eyes. "I love these guys unconditionally, and there is nothing that I wouldn't do for them. They've had my back and supported me when my own parents wouldn't. That is the definition of a family; these men behind me is my family. It won't only be me taking us to a victory Friday, but it will be a piece of each of us taking us to that victory. Thank you guys, I couldn't ask for a better team and a better family." I finished, receiving silence, "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose."

"Can't lose!" Everyone chanted behind me. The guys huddled around me, hugging me as tightly as they could. I wiped my cheeks as we stood in formation. Tim grabbed my hand, giving me a wink. I smiled and breathed heavily. As soon as the ceremony was over, it was time for the supper. Everyone dispersed, I walked through the sea of people and thanked them as I was congratulated.

I found myself at a table, alone. I sat there watching as everyone interacted with other people. I sighed and ate the small plate that Jason sat in front of me before he walked off. I drank the glass of sweet tea, then got up and walked outside getting away from the crowd. I walked to Tim's truck and grabbed a receipt and wrote 'Gone home. Love you & be careful. Lil' Bit' leaving the note on his steering wheel.

I began my walk to the house, which was about ten milesâ€”which really weren't anything but a good exercise. "Hello my friends, we meet again. It's been a while, where should we begin? Feels like forever. Within my heart are memories, of perfect love that you gave to me. Oh, I remember." I sang as I walked past Applebees. "When you are with me, I'm free. I'm carefree, I believe. Above all the others we'll fly, this brings tears to my eyesâ€”my sacrifice."

My pocket vibrated, I grabbed my phone and saw it was Jason who was

calling. I opened it and put it to my ear, "Yeah?"

"Where you at?"

"Walking home. I told you I didn't want to be there and I didn't want to be left alone, and what happens? I was left alone. So yal have a good night, I'll see yal later."

"Johnna."

"Bye Jason, be careful." I said before I hung up. I put my phone in my pocket and continued my walk. I started running half way, then crossed the street to the block where we lived. Ten minutes later, I was home, washed and in my bed. My phone started ringing once more.

"Yes?" I asked not bothering to see who it was.

"Lil' Bit?"

"What Tim?" I asked almost agitated.

"Are you okay?" He wondered, making me roll my eyes.

"Sure am, I'm in bed." I started, "What can I possibly do for you?"

"Why did you leave?"

"I done talked to Jason, I didn't want to be there. I didn't want to be alone, and what happens? I was there by my damn self, Tim. Alone." I growled, "You and everyone else was off doing what yal wanted and I was in the fucking corner alone. So, I left."

"John."

"Just don't Tim, alright? Go have fun, drink your beer, get drunk, have sex. I don't care." I said before I hung up. I rolled to my side and held the pendant in my hands. My phone vibrated, New Msg flashed across the screen. I opened the phone and saw it was from Tim.

"I'm sorry. 143. â€" Riggers."

"Yeah, me, too. 432.- Bit."

Soon enough, the darkness took over my body. Dreams of the upcoming game with Westerby clouded my mind. I woke up and looked at the clock, it was 3:30 AM. I got up and walked towards the kitchen, hearing a noise. I furrowed my eyebrows and grabbed the bat from the closet and gripped it as tight as I could. I tip toed in the hall until I saw a shadow.

The shadow got closer, with a swing I met the assailant. "Ow! Fucking hell, Lil' Bit? It's me!" Tim's voice boomed through the house. My eyes widened, I dropped the bat and turned the light on.

"Tim!" I exclaimed, "The hell are you doing here at 3:30 AM?" I asked looking at his arm, it was already starting to bruise.

"Well I didn't think getting hit was going to be on the agenda,

that's for sure." He said nursing his arm. "Jesus Christ, Bit. The hell is wrong with you?"

"I'm sorry drunken Tim Riggins. I didn't think you would be in my house at 3:30 AM like this. I didn't know if I was being robbed or what."

"No," He started, "You wasn't being robbed."

"Sorry, Riggers." I said hugging him tightly.

"Yeah, I bet." He said looking down at me. I cringed at the alcohol on his breath.

"You're drunk." I said shaking my head. I turned and walked back to my bedroom and got in bed. Minutes later, I felt the bed dip and an arm rest over my side. He pulled me close and kissed my shoulder.

"I'm so sorry for everything I screw up." He whispered, "I'm going to change for you, for me, for Coach. You mean more to me than anyone in this world. I would do anything for you."

Before I could even respond, his light snores sounded through the bedroom. I sighed and turned over, kissing his chin. "I love you, Tim Riggins." I whispered before the sleep took over me.

### 3. Chapter 3

Wednesday morning, the guys and I were back at it again. Coach Taylor told us that we were to attend the PeeWee Panthers Football practice since we were still being highlighted for the High School Football Association.

During school, Tim was asleep during half of the classes of the day, except for the one after lunch. We sat on the bleachers in the gym doing nothing because we had a free day. He sat in front of me with his head in my lap. I ran my fingers through his hair, absentmindedly braiding his hair in small plaits.

"Why do you always braid my hair?"

"Why do you have 80's hair?" I shot back watching him smirk.

"Why do you always say that I have 80's hair?"

"Because you do, but it's a good fit for your ugly face."

"Take that back." He said as his eyes shot open, giving me a playful glare.

"Hmm, think I won't." I tease, bending down and kissing his forehead. "Would it hurt to run a comb through it?"

"And have you mess it up with these braids? No way, Lil' Bit." He replied closing his eyes, he sighed then opened his left eye, "Do you really think I'm ugly?"

"No Tim, you are one of the most gorgeous guys I've ever seen in my



life."

"Mean that?"

"I do." I said sincerely with a smile, "I wouldn't lie to you."

"I know you wouldn't, Lil' Bit." He smiled as he kept his eyes closed. The bell sounded, notifying us that it was time for practice. He groaned and sat up, stretching his arms. I stood up and watched him walk down the bleachers. I made my way down, before I could plant my feet on the floor, he wrapped his arms around me and pulled me off the bleachers. I giggled and laid still on his shoulder.

We met up with Jason on the C- Hall before we made our way to the field house. I heard a laugh behind us, I looked up and saw Coach Taylor behind us chuckling. "He always carries you around, don't he?"

"Like a rag doll, Coach. I think that's all he thinks I am."

"Lies, all lies." Tim said as we walked into the field house with Coach in tow. Tim dropped me at my locker then walked to his and got ready for the PeeWee game. After everyone filed into the field house and got their pads on, we were ready for the game. I still couldn't understand what the big deal was with the news crew. I mean, I understood it was for the first game, but why did they have to follow us everywhere? Like always, I sat on the bench and French braided my hair in two parts, then put my yellow bandana on. After I finished, we walked on the field and met up with the PeeWee Panthers.

"Alright boys, I want the kickers with Lil' Bit." Coach Taylor told the younger group, "Lil' Bit is our kicker, punter, and she's also a wide receiver. How many of yal follow her on the field?"

A slew of boys raised their hands, making me laugh. "That's what I'm talking about. So, A and B string wide receivers, punters and kickers go with her. We're all going to warm up before the scrimmage starts, okay?"

"Yes Coach." The boys called back. Six of the boys walked to me, standing around me protectively, I couldn't help but to laugh. It was like standing around Tim, Jason, Oran, Smash and Johnny.

"Alright men, follow me. If your parents want to come over they are more than welcome to." I said looking at each of them.

"Miss Bit, what's your favorite exercise?" Tony Roberts asked as we walked to the 30 yard line.

"I like several ones actually. To be a good kicker, you have to work on your legs a lot. So, who is the kickers?"

Jon, Steven and Carl raised their hands. "Alright, I want wide receivers on the right and kickers to the left. Now, parents of the kickers, every night it's best if you work with your kids for about twenty minutes. I have a few techniques that will help each of you for kicking."

Jon, Steven and Carl took turns kicking, I stood giving constructive criticism to each parent, who were appreciated. I showed them a few

techniques that would give the ball a better flow to the goal. Thirty minutes of working with each group, showing the receivers an easier way to get set and to rise up for battle; the group was doing the exercises.

"Boys yal are looking better than the bigger Panthers. I think I like yal better, too. They complain about doing exerciseâ€"they're big babies." I said as they and their parents laughed. Coach blew the whistle and called us to come as one group.

"Hey Johnna, do you think Jon will have a chance?" Jon's mom, Theresa, asked. I looked at her and smiled.

"I do. I think he'll be an outstanding player. Those exercises were the ones I did when I was younger." I answered before we got to the group.

"Thank you Johnna."

"No problem." I smiled before Coach started talking.

"Alright everyone, we're going to play some ball. I want the QB's to call out the plays loud and proud in the huddles. Call your calls on the stretch, too, alright? It's going to be my guys against yal. I want this a fair game, okay?"

"Yes sir." Everyone called out and dispersed into our assigned teams. The scrimmage started, Jason, Tim and I walked to the 50 yard line with three of the PeeWee boys.

"Okay, heads or tails, PeeWee?" Coach McGill asked.

"Tails." One called as the coin was in the air. Coach McGill caught the coin and opened his hand.

"Tails it is. Ball first?"

"Yeah." He replied before he was handed the ball. I chuckled before we walked back to our side. Defense was up first, the offense stood over by Coach as the game started. It seemed like every ten minutes, we were switched up. The PeeWee's were winning by a touchdown.

Offense was on the field for the last half. We ran a few of the easier plays; Jason snapped the ball to me, I ran to the middle, but getting pummeled by four of the boys who piled on top of me. I laughed and laid there until they got up, then helped me up. It was our first down, the boys came up to the line and got ready. We switched it up on the younger boys, but they ended up intercepting and making another touchdown.

The game was over and the big Panthers lost by a touchdown. The younger boys were over the moon happy with their big win. We all got together, taking pictures with both teams together. We got up and walked to the field house together to the play room, and took a knee with the younger kids in front of us.

"All these plays on the board are very important. These are the exact same plays that you will learn when you get older. You have to remember each play, learn the specifics and work as a team." Jason

said with a smile. "Each play is very distinct, but when you get them down and remember them, they are hard to forget."

"Mr. Street are you going to college to be a football player?"

"I would like to."

"I think you should, I think you could be a pro."

Jason chuckled, "We'll see about that, little man. Let us pray." He said going down on one of his knees and bowed his head. Everyone locked hands and bowed their heads for prayer.

"Mr. Street?" Jon called out, "Do you think God loves football?"

"I think everyone loves football." He said with a smile then bowed his head, "Our Father in heaven," He started and everyone fell in with him "Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

After the prayer, I was called to the front to talk about the diversity of the game. However, me being the person that I am, I gave them a few play by plays because actually learning the dynamics of football were a little boring. Thirty minutes later, we were told we could go.

I sighed as I walked into the pool house. I was overly tired, my body hurt, my legs even hurt. I ran a hot bath and threw in a bath ball. I grabbed Tim's iPod and plugged it into the auxiliary line of the radio I had in the bathroom. I took my blue Dillon Panthers t-shirt and my shorts off, along with my panties and threw them in the clothes hamper.

I pressed play on the iPod and slid in the hot water as Def Leppard's Pour Some Sugar On Me. I slid farther in the tub, only allowing my head to be above the water. I closed my eyes and sighed, letting my body relax to the warmth. A knock on the door made me groan loudly.

"Yes?"

"Johnna, it's your mom." I heard her saw from the bathroom door. "Mind if I come in?"

"Sure." I said as she walked in.

"We need to talk." She started, "I think you need to quit football."

"Why?" I asked, "I'm not taking any attention away from Jason. So, what's the reason?"

"Girls shouldn't be playing football."

I rolled my eyes, "You know what mother? You can take your opinions and shove them up your ass, because I am going to play football until I graduate."

"Well, you can't live here anymore then."

"Okay, I'll have my stuff out by tomorrow." I spat, "But for the time being, get out my house."

She nodded and turned, walking out the bathroom. I reached over the tub and grabbed my phone, dialing Jason's number. "Hello?"

"So, your mom came over here and said that I need to quit football. I said I wouldn't so she told me that I can't live back here anymore."

"What the hell?" He exclaimed, "Why?"

"Hell if I know, so I told her I'll have my stuff out by tomorrow."

"Lil' Bit,"

"Don't worry about it, Bubba." I said, "I'm fixing to get out the tub, cook some supper and watch TV before I go to bed."

"I'll come over in a little bit."

"Alright, love you."

"Love you Lil' Bit." He replied before I hung up the phone. I sighed and called Tim. He answered his phone in a heavy breath.

"Bit?"

"Yeah, I need you."

"Okay, are you home?"

"Yeah, I'm fixing to get out the tub." I said, before the door opened quickly and in walked Tim, who had the phone against his ear. He smiled widely and sat on the side of the tub. "Well, that was quick."

He chuckled, "I was in the neighborhood. What's wrong?"

"Well, Joanne came over and said that she thinks I should quit football. It's not for girls, and I told her I wasn't. I told her I was going to play until I graduated and then she told me that if that was going to happen then I needed to move out. So, can I move into your pool house?"

"Yeah, you can." He paused, "You don't have to live in the pool house either."

"I'll pay rent and all of that. I won't be in your way or anything. I'll keep to myself like usual." I ran off, he leaned forwards and cupped his hand over my lips.

"I said you don't have to live in the pool house. You can live inside."

"I don't want to be in the way, Tim. The pool house is fine."

"If you say so then." He paused, "You alright?"

"I will be. I need to call Coach and let him know I'll miss practice tomorrow and school."

"I will, just finish your bath."

"Thanks Tim." I said with a smile. "Thank you for everything."

"You'd help me, we both know this."

I nodded, "I would."

He leaned over and kissed my head before he walked out the bathroom with my phone to his ear. I sighed, feeling the tears prick my eyes. I hurried and washed my hair and body, then got out the tub. I wrapped a towel around me securely and walked into my bedroom. I changed in Jason's Panthers Football t-shirt and a pair of shorts. I towel-dried my hair then braided a simple braid on the side. I walked back in the living room area and sat beside Tim on the couch. He was in an in-depth conversation with Coach. "Here she is, Coach."

He handed the phone to me. I put it to my ear, "Hey Coach."

"You know you can stay with us."

"I'll be fine in Tim's pool house. Did he tell you I'll be missing practice and school tomorrow?"

"Yeah, and I figured that I could get the team over and help you move."

"Coach you don't have to do that."

"I know I don't, but we will. You know the team has got your back always, Lil' Bit." He said sincerely. Tears welled in my eyes, one slipped down my cheek.

"Thank you so much, Coach. I'll have breakfast done then. What would yal like?"

"You don't have to do that."

"But I am." I countered, "So, I'll have breakfast ready for everyone in the morning."

"You win, Lil' Bit. I'll be there at 6 sharp okay?" He wondered, I nodded absentmindedly.

"Works for me, Coach. I'll see you then." I said before he hung up. I sighed and laid my head on Tim's shoulder. "Well, the team is coming over in the morning to help."

"That's so sweet." He teased, wrapping his arms around me, pulling me on him. I giggled and laid my head on his collar bone, laying my hand over his heart. He laid his hand on mine and kissed my head. "Everything will be fine."

"I hope your right. I just Tyra don't come to the pool house at night and kill me in my sleep."

He chuckled, "She wouldn't dare."

"I'm sure she would." I laughed, closing my eyes. "It's been such a long day. You need to make sure it's okay with Billy."

"Lil' Bit he would rather you live with us than here alone." He said against my head. I nodded and sighed. The door opened, and Jason walked in with grocery bags.

"Hey Timmy," Jason said, "Lil' Bit, I'm cooking supper and we're going to have a sleepover."

I chuckled and nodded, "Alright, Bubba. Whatcha gonna cook?"

"Well, I picked some food up from the store. You know I can only cook hamburger helper, so I got that Cheesy Beef Pasta that you like."

"So thoughtful, thank you Bubba." I looked at him and smiled. He nodded and leaned down, kissing my head. "We sleeping in here or in my room? Tim are you staying?"

"I will if you want me to."

"It's settled then. Tim go take a shower, I'll hold down the couch." I said as I sat up. He groaned, but got up and headed towards the bathroom. I got up and walked to Jason, who was browning the ground beef. I wrapped my arms around his waist and laid my head on his back. "Thank you, Bubba."

"You're my sister, Lil' Bit. I'll do anything in this world for you. I do not agree with what mom said. I'm so sorry for the crap you have been put through."

"It's not your fault, Bubba. I'm the problem as always." I said as I leaned up and kissed the back of his head. He turned around and wrapped his arms around me protectively.

"You're not a problem, I don't know why they insist that you are."

I shrugged and pulled out of his arms, "I guess we'll never know. I'm fixing to watch TV. I talked to Coach and he said that the team will help me move tomorrow."

"Sounds good. Tim said you could stay with him?" He questioned, looking over at me. I nodded.

"I'm taking over the pool house."

He chuckled, "You and your pool houses."

"They're cozy, and theirs is bigger than this one."

"I agree. Go put us a movie in, this should be done by the time Timmy get's out the shower." He said looking over at me. I nodded and looked through the DVD's that I owned. I found the perfect one, See Spot Run. I put the DVD into the player and let the previews play.

The menu of the movie came on before Tim walked into the living room. He sat on the couch and groaned as he pulled the phone out his pocket.

"Yeah?" He asked, I shook my head and walked to the fridge and started getting the drinks together. "Fine, I'll be there. Bye." Tim hung up the phone and stood up, "I'm gonna head on out, Tyra wants to go out for supper. I have to go be a good boyfriend."

I couldn't help but to laugh, "Tyra's not that bad. You're dating her she deserves to be taken out on a date."

"Yeah, if you say so. I'll get bitched out for nothing." He said kissing me on the head, then hugged me tightly. Once he let go, he bumped fists with Jason then walked out the door. I looked at Jason and grinned.

"Sibbles sleepover." I boasted, he just laughed and shook his head. I poured the two of us tea and set them on the coffee table. He brought our plates, forks and napkins over and sat beside me. I started the movie and we began to eat.

After we finished we pulled the couch out and got comfortable. As the movie ended, it was already 11PM. I turned the TV off and turned on my side, facing Jason. "Thank you for always supporting me, Bubba."

"You're my sister, John. I'll always support you." He whispered before he kissed my head, "Get some sleep, we have a big day ahead of us tomorrow. I love you Lil' Bit."

"I love you, too, Bubba." I replied before I closed my eyes and fell into a deep sleep.

#### 4. Chapter 4

\*\*I just want to say thank you all for the follows, favorites, and commentary! You are amazing, I appreciate it more than you will ever know! 3 \*\*

Thursday morning, Coach Taylor was knocking on my door at 6 sharp with the guys behind him, all but Tim. Thankfully, I had gotten up a little earlier and cooked breakfast for the team. The first thing that happened after they got here was stuffing their faces with a delicious breakfast, as they called it. Afterwards, they thanked me before obtaining orders from Coach Taylor.

By 10 AM, Coach Taylor and I were in my room getting things packed up while the guys were moving furniture from the pool house to Tim's. The only thing we had to finish packing was my room, and we were almost done with that. Coach Taylor looked over at me and grimaced, "How's your side?"

"It'll be fine 'fore it's over with, Coach. I just want to say that I appreciate this. Thank you for all that you do for me." I spoke sincerely as I packed the last box up.

"I've told you, Lil' Bit, I'm always going to be there no matter what. Let me take that box and I'll put it at the door. Those boys

should be back by now." He said with a pat on my back. I nodded and watched him walk out, leaving me in the empty room. I sighed and looked around before I walked out, following Coach Taylor.

Oran grabbed a box, followed by Matt, Smash, Walker, Johnny, and Reyes; they took them to the truck. Coach Taylor wrapped his arm around my shoulders and walked out the pool house with me. "What are you doing later?"

"I have to work tonight at Fran's. Next week I start pulling a few doubles. I need the money, I'm going to continue paying rent just like I do here to Billy and Tim. I told them I would be out the way, they wouldn't even know I was there."

"Well you know you are always welcomed to come over at our house. How about on Thursday's, you come over and we'll have supper." He said opening my truck door for me. I thanked him, then he shut it. "Mind if I ride with you?"

"Come on Coach." I said with a laugh. He smiled and walked around getting into the passenger's seat. "I have the papers to be emancipated, do you think you could witness them? If not, it's okay, I can get the courts to do them."

"Let me talk to Tami about this, okay? I would sign them, but I want to run it by her, as well. Is that okay?" He wondered as we got on the road, heading to Tim and Billy's.

"That's fine Coach. I just want to start over on a clean slate. I know I have you and Mr. T, Julie, Jason, Tim, Billy, the team; sometimes I can't help but to hope that I do get into a college. Deep down, I hope that getting into a good college would make them proud, but there's always something in the back of my mind that that wouldn't ever happen." I spoke absentmindedly. "I always wished they would just show some pride in me. I try my hardest to get some kind of loving reaction, but all I end up with is hate."

"Sweetheart, between me and you, they're missing out on an amazing opportunity. You are an amazing young woman, I would be overly proud to have you as my own. I wish they could see what you are and what you're going to be, because you have the potential to go all the way. When you find the college that you want, when you get that scholarship I will be there for you. You have my support, I will help you in any way I can. All I ask is that you don't ever give up."

"I won't Coach. I can promise you that." I replied as we pulled into Tim and Billy's driveway. Jason came around the corner with wide eyes. "Hey Bubba."

"Steer clear of Tyra. She's here and she isn't too happy about you moving to Tim's pool house." He said as he helped me out the truck.

"Great, just great." I sighed and walked with him and Coach to the back yard.

"Close your eyes, Lil' Bit." Oran said as he walked outside. I closed my eyes and felt myself being picked up, then before I knew it my feet were planted on the floor.



"Last night when Coach called us, we decided to get this right for you. You deserve the world." Smash started, then was cut off by Johnny.

"You have always helped me when I needed it in school work. You are the reason why I am passing." Johnny's voice flooded in from the right.

"We know everything about you, thanks to Jason and Tim." Eugene stated, "We wanted you to feel welcomed and to be in a loving home."

"It hurt me when I called Jason last night. I didn't know that a parent could be so cruel. We hope that you love this." Walker said from my left.

"We love you Lil' Bit." The team said in unison, "Welcome home."

I took that as a cue and opened my eyes. The walls were painted a medium grey, the furniture was neatly set up. Tears pricked my eyes, the team done this for me. "Now, Lil' Bit if you come this way with me, we will show you the kitchen area." Jason said grabbing my hand in his. He pulled me into the kitchen, I gasped at everything. It wasn't new by any means, but it was heart-warming at the work they put in.

"Your room will be your favorite." Oran said with a smile. I wiped my eyes and squeezed Jason's hand. He pulled me down the white walled hall and into the bed room. My eyes widened as I walked into the light grey room.

"This is beautiful." I whispered, looking around the room. "Thank you guys so much."

"All for you." The team said in unison. I hugged each of them tightly and kissed their cheeks.

"Last room, the bathroom." Reyes said with a nod. Jason pulled me down the hall to the bathroom. I couldn't help but to smile; the walls were a heather grey color. The whole house was beautiful.

"One last thing, Lil' Bit." Coach Taylor said at the beginning of the hall. Jason pulled me towards him and walked back into the living room. I looked up and saw 'Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Can't Lose' above the couch on the wall with a picture of the whole team under it.

"This is amazing. Thank yal so much." I whispered with a smile.

"It's not a problem. These boys have been at this all night. We all wanted it to give you a loving home." He said as he wrapped an arm around my shoulders.

"I appreciate it guys. Yal are the absolute best." I said hugging each of them again. "This means a lot."

"Anything for you Lil' Bit." Matt and Oran said in unison.

"Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose." I said with a smile.

"Can't lose!" They called out.

"I have to work tonight, so yal please come by." I begged, "I need my boys in my life. Pre-game eating."

"Are you cooking or waiting tonight?" Jason looked down at me and asked.

"Probably both."

"Alright, we'll be there." Oran said with a grin.

"Do yal want me to cook yal lunch?"

"We're good. We're going to get sandwiches then to an early practice. Coach told us that earlier." Smash said. I nodded and bit my lip.  
"You are off for the day."

"Well tonight, free fries for everyone, alright?"

"No, you can't do that." Smash protested, I rolled my eyes.

"Whatever." I laughed, "I do appreciate this, though. Thank yal for being my family."

"Thank you for being you." Jason said before he kissed my forehead.

It wasn't long after that, I was left by myself. I grabbed my phone and called Tim, but no answer. I sighed and called Tyra's number. She answered the phone, breathing heavily.

"Yeah?"

"Tyra, I was wondering if you wanted to come to the pool house and talk." I offered, waiting for a reply.

"I'm busy with Tim. You interrupted us. Maybe another time, bye." She said before she hung up. I sighed and laid on the couch, then fell into a deep sleep. I was mentally and physically exhausted.

I woke up by a knock on the door. I got up and wiped my eyes from the sleep and walked to the door. Tyra. I unlocked the door and opened it, moving to the side and letting her in,

"It looks really good in here." She said looking around the house.

"Thanks, want anything to drink? I think Billy put some beer in the fridge."

"Yeah, thanks." She said before she sat on the couch. I walked to the fridge and grabbed two beers. I opened it before handing it to her.  
"So, you wanted to talk?"

"Yeah." I paused, "I know there is a little of animosity between us, but I want you to know that I will not be in the way of the guys. I told Tim that he wouldn't even know I was here."

"Yeah, we need to talk about the whole Tim and you thing."

"What's there to talk about?" I questioned, "He's my best friend besides my brother."

"It needs to stop, because any time you call he'll come running." She scorned, "I'm his girlfriend, I should get his attention. Not some loner."

"Fair enough." I said simply. She scoffed and got up, walking out the pool house. I chuckled to myself and shook my head. I grabbed the remote and turned the TV on, then got up and popped in a DVD in the DVD player. The movie Radio started, halfway through the movie I noticed I only had an hour before I had to get to work. I didn't even realize it had gotten so late.

I got up and walked into the bathroom then got a shower. After washing, I got out and got ready for work. I picked out a plain black t-shirt and a pair of jean shorts, then a pair of black Nike's. After I got dressed, I started on my makeup and hair. I looked at the time, I only had thirty minutes to make it to work. It was fixing to be 7PM, I sighed and walked into the living room and grabbed my phone and keys before walking out the pool house.

I walked around Tim and Billy's house and got in my truck. I started it up and pulled off into the street, heading to work. Ten minutes later, I pulled up to Fran's. I got out the truck and walked inside, clocking in quickly.

"Lil' Bit I want you to wait tonight on your normal side, alright?" Mr. Arthur said as I walked behind the counter. I smiled and nodded. "Also, I need you to train the new girl, Stephanie."

"Alright, Mr. Arthur." I said before I grabbed my apron and tying it around me. I grabbed my pen and paper. "Hey Mr. Arthur, do you know where she is?"

"Yeah, she said she had to use the bathroom. Should be out shortly, hopefully. Be nice, Lil' Bit." He warned, I giggled and nodded.

"Fine." I said playfully earning a worried expression from Mr. Arthur. I couldn't help but to laugh. "Everything will be fine, Mr. Arthur, I promise."

"I know it will." He started, "You ready for tomorrow?"

"As I'm going to be." I stated, "I hope for a W."

"Lil' Bit I think it will be a W." He smiled, "If not, I'm still proud of you."

"Thank you Mr. Arthur." I smiled widely, "I appreciate that."

"Mr. Arthur, there are some kids that are just sitting around outside." A woman come up then looked at me sneeringly. I rolled my eyes and looked over my shoulder, it was the guys, rally girls, Tyra, and Lyla. I couldn't help but to smile.

"You got them Lil' Bit." Mr. Arthur said with a wink. "Stephanie watch Johnna, she's the best waitress I have."

"Aw, Arty!" I exclaimed as I heard the bell ring. I turned and saw the team and the girls file in. "Hey boys!"

"Lil' Bit!" They exclaimed and huddled around me.

"Grab a seat, yal want the usual drinks?" I asked looking around, they all nodded. I turned and started fixing 25 Coke's and 25 Sprite's with the help of Stephanie. I told her to go ask the Rally Girl's what they wanted to drink. I grabbed ten of the cokes and put them on the tray. I walked back into the lobby and set the tray down on the empty table. I started grabbing the drinks and setting them in front of the guys. I walked back to the back and grabbed ten more and brought them out there; doing so until all the guys had their drinks.

They each thanked me as Stephanie brought out the Rally Girl's drinks, along with Tyra's. I smiled at Lyla and put her Diet Coke in front of her, then Jason's Coke in front of him. Jason looked up at me and smiled. I grinned before I turned and started taking orders from every one of the guys and Lyla; Stephanie took the girls' order.

Two hours later, I was finally on break. I sat with Jason and Lyla after his interview finished. Thanking him after he save me half of his Aztec burger, I finished eating and sat back.

"Hey Lil' Bit, you'll be at practice tomorrow?" Reyes asked as he looked over at me. I nodded.

"Yeah, I will. I can't believe tomorrow is our first season game. We've worked our asses off though for it. I'm ready to win." I boasted, making Jason, Lyla and Reyes laugh. I caught Tim's stare, but adverted my eyes back to Jason. I looked at my watch and saw I had ten minutes left.

"What time you getting off tonight?" Jason asked as I ate one of his fries.

"Eleven. Yal are going to the Panthers Patch tonight?"

"Yeah, you going to come when you get off?"

"If yal are still there I will. I'll call you when I get off to see where you're at." I said as I finished the fries. I looked at my clock and it was time to clock back in. "Alright, I got to get back to work. Yal be careful going out there, love yal."

"We love you, too, Lil' Bit." Jason said with a smile. I got up and kissed his cheek before I walked to the back to clock in. Once I was back on the clock, I made sure the guys were okay still. I refilled the empty glasses, and took their empty plates. An hour later, Fran's wasn't packed anymore. The team along with the Rally's went to the Panthers Patch for a pre-game bash.

I started sweeping and cleaning the counter as Mr. Arthur started counting the drawers. Stephanie cleaned the bathrooms and wiped the barstools off. Soon enough, the three of us clocked out and locked

up. I sent Jason a text asking him were they still at the Panthers Patch, he soonly replied with a 'yes'. I told him I was off and heading that way, and that I'd see him in a few minutes.

Five minutes later, I pulled into the Panthers Patch and got out the truck. I saw Lyla laying against Jason in the lawn chair. Tim was sitting by the cooler, which wasn't anything new; he was talking to Jason about getting one percent of Jason's football paychecks, and becoming Jason's land caretaker.

"Let's touch God, this time boys. Let's touch God." I overheard Tim say, he settled back in his chair after grabbing a beer and looked at me. I waved smally to him before I talked to Gray Jones of the team. I felt a heavy arm wrap around my shoulders, I looked over and saw it was Oran.

"It's about time for yal to stop the drinking. We have an early practice in the morning since it's game day."

"Oh, come on Lil' Bit. We won't be Riggins drunk in the morning." Oran said laying his weight on me.

"Hell I hope not, I don't want to do any more exercises than I have to. Those wind sprints kill me, all thanks to Rigs."

He and Gray laughed, "That's true."

"I think that and the bleachers run are the only things I hate." I said as Jason looked over his shoulder and smiled. "Let me go talk to him real quick, Oran will you grab me a beer?"

"Yes ma'am." Oran said before he sauntered off to get me a beer. I walked over to Jason and Lyla, then pulled up a chair, earning a permanent glare from Tyra. I rolled my eyes and smiled bitchily at her.

"How was the rest of work?" Lyla asked as Oran set a beer in my hands. I thanked him and took a quick swallow. Eugene drug up a seat and sat beside me.

"It was quiet, I actually missed yal." I said with a laugh, "I'm training Stephanie; that woman is a freaking work of art. I don't know why Mr. Arthur hired her. She took forever doing orders and getting drinks done."

"You'll break her in like you do any one else." Tim started, "She'll be better in time."

"Oh, I know that. It's just she's so damn dense it's unreal. It took her an hour to clean the bathrooms which is a fifteen minute job." I bantered, making the close group laugh. Tyra got up and walked behind me, I felt a cold liquid on my shoulder. I growled and stood up, turning to her. "What the fuck is your problem, Collette? You want to fucking go at it, then let's go. Don't be the jealous trashy bitch that you are, okay?"

"You aint nothing but an orphan." She spat, making me roll my eyes, "Tim will never want an orphan."

"Whoah, whoah, stop." Tim growled out, "Tyra what is your

problem?"

"Lil' Bit calm down." Jason said resting a hand on my shoulder. I simply nodded.

"Actually, I emancipated myself. That was my choice, sweetheart. You think that Tim cares how you feel about him and I? He don't. We're best friends, we'll always be best friends. If you have a problem with that then you can cry a river, build a bridge and get the fuck over it." I paused, "Because you know what? I was there before you were and I will be there after you."

She scowled, drawing her arm back and bringing it forward. Without a flinch, I caught her fist in my hand. I smiled at her shocked expression and twisted her arm, bringing her down on her knees. "You may think you are a Billy Badass, but you are nothing Tyra Collette. You won't ever amount to anything with that bitchy façade you have going. Clean up your fucking act, your attitude and get some morals for yourself if you want to be taken seriously. Try to touch me one more time, I'll do more than an arm twist." I growled, twisting her arm a little more, hearing a popping sound. Her face gave away a painful expression, "Understand?"

"Ye-yeah." She stuttered out. I smiled and let her go, watching her hold her arm.

"Good." I said before chugging the rest of my beer. I threw the bottle in the trash and watched Tim and Tyra walk past me. I sat back in my seat and propped my legs up on Eugene's knees.

"You handled that better than I thought you would've." Oran said as he took Tim's spot.

"Me, too. You can think Street for that."

"You're still a Street." Jason said looking at me.

"I know, but it's only because you're my brother."

He chuckled, "You are such a asshole."

I smiled, "I love you, too, Bubba." I paused, "Boys tomorrow we got to give it our all. We need to make Dillon proud, we need to make Coach proud. He's put too much into us for us not to win in appreciation. We need to win for Coach Taylor. He's instilled faith in each of us—he means business. We are his, Dillon is his."

"You're right, Lil' Bit." Oran said as Eugene, Jason and Lyla agreed with him. "We do owe Coach that much."

"Well tomorrow, let's give him two-hundred percent instead of the usual one-hundred percent we usually give him." I countered looking at the guys, who nodded.

"I say we do it." Eugene said with a smile.

"Then lets." I said as Tim walked over to me and grabbed me by the hand and pulled me behind him. "Um, excuse you?" He never said a word, just pulled me away from the small crowd. He stopped and turned

me around at my truck's passenger door.

"How could you?" He asked outraged.

"Are you fucking kidding me right now, Tim Riggins?"

"You popped her shoulder out of place."

"Well, it's better than a fucking black eye, am I right?"

"Why are you such a bitch? Tyra is my girlfriend, Johnna, mine. I can't help that you can't find a boyfriend for whatever reason that may be. Don't toy with my relationships when you aren't happy." He seethed, his hands in a ball.

"Where the fuck did you get that from? You want to date trash, then so be it Tim. We all know that while she's fucking you, she's trying to get it from Smash, Reyes and Johnny. Before it's over with someone's penis is going to rot off from the funk she'll get, and when that happens, don't come to me." I started, the defense wall was already sky high and bullet proof.

"Also, I try to be nice to her. She come over earlier and I gave her a beer. She told me to stay away from you. She doesn't like me and she never will. I can't help that. I haven't done anything to her, until tonight. She may be taller than me, but she won't ever walk over me. That goes for you and anyone else, too." I spat before I turned and walked to the drivers side. "Jason, Eugene, Oran, Lyla, anyone else who isn't Dumbshit Riggins or Whore-a Collette, I love you all. Be safe and I'll see yal tomorrow."

I got in the truck after they yelled they loved me and they would see me tomorrow. I started my truck up and put it in reverse, feeling the truck run over something. I saw Tim bending over with his foot in his hand.

"Grow a pair Tim, that will make everything better. Fact." I smiled maliciously, but ignored his guttural cries. I made my way to the pool house—ten minutes later, I arrived. I walked to the back of Tim and Billy's house and walked in the pool house.

I started taking my clothes off and walked into the bathroom. I ran a hot shower and got in, letting the liquid consume me. I bit my lip and thought about the things Tim said. I shook my thoughts and washed quickly. I stepped out and wrapped a towel securely around me before I walked in my bedroom. I changed into a t-shirt and boy shorts, then got in the bed.

## 5. Chapter 5

**\*\*Game Day\*\***

My alarm sounded loudly in my room. I sighed and rolled over, seeing it was 5:15AM. I groaned and sat up in the bed, letting my feet hang off the side. I ran my hands over my eyes, getting the sleep out. I stood up and walked to the bathroom and turned the shower on. Letting the shower warm up, I slid in the water and groaned in bliss.

I quickly washed and got out the shower. I braided my hair in my

usual two French braids and got dressed in my grey Dillon Panthers t-shirt and a pair of jean shorts. I grabbed my flip flops and slipped them on. My phone started ringing, surprisingly I saw MOM across the screen. I furrowed my eyebrows and opened the phone. "Hello?"

"Hey, Johnna, it's mom."

"Yeah, I know. Look, I'm busy getting dressed for practice, do you mind cutting this short? I have better things to do than stand here while you rain on my parade." I spoke hotly.

"Y-yeah. I just wanted to wish you good luck on the game today."

"Okay, thank you." I said as I grabbed my Nike draw-string bag that had my toiletries in it. "Is there anything else you want to say?"

"Yeah, you left your title to the truck here."

"Okay, just give it to Jason before he leaves. Thank you and goodbye." I said before hanging up. I walked out the pool house and out to my truck. I got in and started it up before I peeled out towards school.

Minutes later, I came up to the field house, noticing I was the only one there. I walked to the building and unlocked the door, then walked in to the locker room. I quickly got in my pants and pads. I put my socks and cleats on after I got my pants tied. I walked into the film room and played the first game I played last year.

I rolled my head and watched the most disappointing part of the game. I was set on the ball, Jason started to throw it at me, but fumbled as I was hit with a brute force. I laid on the field not moving at all. The wind was knocked out of me, I remember that night to this day. I had never been hit that hard before in my life. The guy was a foot taller than me, and way bigger than Oran, who was right at 280 and 6'2. I watched as Tim, Jason and Oran run over to me, taking a knee by my sides. Coach McGill and Dr. Bynes ran over to me and started asking questions.

Before I knew it, I had gotten up with their help and walked to the bench. I took my helmet off and hung my head, letting the blood fall from a cut over my eye and my nose. I sat out for three downs and a turnover before I got back out there.

That night against Westerby, we took that W home with no avail. I ended up with the game ball being I took out three touchdowns and scored the winning touchdown. I remember going to the hospital and finding out that I, simultaneously, had no concussion, contusions or anythingâ€"just a laceration and a bloody nose.

I jumped slightly as the light turned on, I looked over my shoulder and saw Coach Taylor. "That was a good game." He said as he sat beside me. "You took that hit like a champ."

I chortled, "Leroy Phillips, 6'5, 305. He could bench close to 650â€"hell, I can barely lift 150. Even watching that, I felt that pain all over again. He's bigger than Oran, and Oran's a big boy. I'm



right at 5'2, Coach, close to 135 soaking wet. That wasn't a hit that was a straight up pummel and kill shot."

He and I laughed in unison, "You went down and I knew you were hurting. I know they had a big dispute about it. Jason called me and asked me about what I would do if I was your brother."

"There's nothing you really can do, though, Coach. Football is a contact sport." I shrugged it off, he just gave me a knowing look.

"It was a wrongful hit, Lil' Bit." He said leaning forward, "Everyone in football knows the right way to tackle. You could've ended his football career with the snap of your fingers."

"But I didn't. He apologized repeatedly that night, Coach. He came to the hospital and cried when it happened."

"I understand." He said as we heard locker doors being shut loudly. I groaned and cut the tape off and got up. I walked back into the locker room and smiled as the guys were getting their chest plates on. Tim looked over at me with pleading eyes, the alcohol was strong on him. I rolled my eyes and shook my head.

"Can we talk?" He asked looking down at me.

"Why? You said all you needed to say last night." I shrugged, before turning around and putting the yellow folded bandana around my head, tying it securely. He sighed heavily and punched his locker, scaring me. I grabbed my iPod and plugged my earphones in my ears, listening to Michael Jackson's Dirty Diana. I leaned over, resting my elbows on my knees, my legs moved to the beat of the song. I closed my eyes and zoned into my usual pre-game ritual.

I swayed side to side, hoping, praying for a good game. As the song went off, I rolled my head and opened my eyes. I looked around and watched Coach Taylor come in the locker room. I put the Eye Black under my eyes and put a small 6 and 30 on my left cheek for Jason and Oran, and a 33 for Tim on my right.

"Take a knee." Was all he said before Tim and I took our knee beside each other. "Alright Lil' Bit and gentlemen, we're going to come in this game hot and heavy. " He said, "I want everyone to pray for this. Let's pray for a fair game, an easy game, and a W." Tim and I held hands as everyone bowed their heads down to pray. After prayer, Coach smiled, "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose."

"Can't lose!" We chanted, I stood up and held my helmet in the air.

"Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!" We all chanted, "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!"

"Clear what?" I yelled standing up on the bench.

"Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!"

"One more time, then game time baby!" I yelled, "Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!" We chanted for the last time, roaring in cheers.

I pulled Tim's head down to me and pressed my forehead to his, "We'll talk about everything later. Let's not let this affect our game." He nodded and grabbed me from the bench and held me up to hit the Panthers P on the wall.

After slapping it, he slapped it and kissed my head. "Let's do this boys!" I said as I locked arms with Tim and Jason. Jason locked his arm with Smash. We walked onto the field, hearing the crowd roar. I couldn't help but to smile, as Smash, Tim and Jason walked to the middle of the field with three of the Chaps. We were elected for kickoff since we won the coin toss. The Special Team and I up to Coach Taylor, we were about kick off.

"Give em' hell, Lil' Bit. Special Team, on me!" Coach Taylor yelled out. I smiled and strapped my helmet. The guys and I walked on the field, ready for the kick off. The whistle blew, I ran at the ball and kicked it with all the power I had. The returner of the Chaps caught it, I ran as fast as I could and tackled him on their 20 yard line. The Special Team and I ran off the field, ready for the next play. The guys tapped my helmet with bright smiles.

"Let's go guys!" I called out as the Defense Team walked on the field. I bit my lip as I watched the action go down. The Chaps' last down was on the 40 yard line, their side. Soon enough, the Offense was up.

The Offense Team huddled up, the formation of the plays were laid out sporadically. After the break, the guys and I got in our positions; we knew it was going to be dirty. First play was a success, thirty yards at the first down. Within the succession of the team, everything after the second down, it was getting dirty. Hits were becoming harder, the guys and I were getting tired, but something had to be done.

We were trailing the Chaps by a touchdown. Tim had three scratches on his neck, my leg was hurting like crazy. There were hardly covers for Jason, the Chaps were a tad too fast. With the blocks that Tim and I were doing to Smash, everything was falling into place, finally we finally tied and it was finally halftime. The team walked into the field house and took a needed water break. I wiped my face from the sweat and leaned back against my locker drowning out McGill's voice.

Soon enough, halftime was over and it was time to take the field again. It was go time. It was down to the nitty gritty by now. Blocking was the toughest thing ever; Smash, Tim and I were on our men like white on rice.

Jason threw the ball to Eugene, but it was intercepted, so Jason went after the man with the ball, I watched as everything unfolded. He laid on the ground. My heart raced, I took my helmet off and ran to him. "Bubba! Jason!" I yelled, not getting any response. "Someone help!" I yelled out frantically, "Bubba, please."

"Bit," He called out in a panic. I could hear mom crying out.

"I'm right here, Bubba. Someone is coming." I said holding his hand. "I promise, someone is coming." Coach Taylor took me in his arms, I couldn't help but to cry. The hit was hard; it was almost wrong. He

wasn't moving, he thought he was moving his legs, but he wasn't. After the medics got Jason on a stretcher, he called out to me.

"Bit, do me a favor,"

"What?" I asked worriedly.

"Beat them."

"For you, Bubba. I love you."

"I love you, Lil' Bit." He whispered before they rolled him away. I hung my head and dropped to my knees. The tears fell down my face freely. I felt arms pull me up, it was Tim with Oran and Smash standing behind him. I turned and pushed my face in his chest plate. He kissed my head and held me tight without hurting me.

"Everything's going to be fine. We have to win for him."

I nodded, "For him." I said with the best game face I would summon. Matt was appointed Captain since he was the new QB1. He, Smash and Reyes walked on the field to meet back with the referees and three of the Chaps. The four of us walked to the huddle, with Matt the QB1. "Remember what we talked about, Matt. You have to keep your head up, shoulder down. You have to lead us."

"I-I will." He said, I nodded and patted his back. "Alright, we're going Pro Right 90."

"No, no, Pro Left 90." Smash interrupted, "You know the play right?"

"Yeah, okay, okay," He paused, "We're going Pro Left 90 25 Blast, on one."

"Break!" We yelled, then got in our positions. After a few attempts and failures, Coach talked to Matt about reading the coverage. We got back in the huddle once more. He called out a play, the one that I came up with. It was simple, three snaps, three passes and I would carry the ball to the end zone.

There was only time for one last play, our ball and our win. The teams' faith in a win was outstanding, the crowd's cheers were a push towards our success.

"You got this, Seven. Just breathe, slow down and breathe." I said reassuringly. He nodded as he broke the huddle. We got into formation, Matt executed the play perfectly. He snapped the ball to Smash, then Smash turned it to Tim, and then Tim passed to me. Smash came on my left as Tim came to my right leading the block for me. I ran as fast as I could, making the winning touchdown.

I threw the ball down and dropped to my knees. I closed my eyes and leaned forward, taking a deep breath. I heard my name being yelled, I looked over my shoulder and saw Oran running to me, he picked me up and jumped around then put me on his shoulders. The team surrounded us with cheers, hugs and chants. I couldn't help but to smile, I took my helmet off and pushed it towards the night sky. We started chanting

"Six Street! Six Street! Six Street!"

The team along with the Chaps got on one knee as Smash prayed. Tim and Oran were on the sides of me, Tim kept his hold on my hand as we prayed.

Before I could even blink, it seemed like everything happened so fast. I was in the hall of the hospital. I isolated myself from everyone, including Oran. Tim wouldn't even step foot in the hospital; hell I didn't even blame him. I hated hospitals.

I sat there on the floor in my football pants and an UA shirt; I was at an angle that I could see Jason. The sight hurt me. He was in a metal support, sitting up. I couldn't help but to cryâ€"everything with Jason was touch and go. I prayed hard, harder than I've ever prayed before. I could only hope that he would be okayâ€"I couldn't live without my brother, my number one supporter.

"Why couldn't it have been her? It's all her fault, it should've been her. She isn't the star, she is a burnout." I heard my mom say to my dad. It hurt, more than anything. "He had a future."

"Joanne, let's not do this right now. I know what you mean though, I agree. It's not fair." Dad said in reply. I couldn't help but to laugh. I stood up and got their attention.

"You know, it's real shitty to say that. I know he is better than me, he will always be. I know I'm the mistake, but wishing that on your own daughterâ€"that's kinda fucked up. Thanks for the love, mom and dad. 'Preciate it a lot."

I turned and saw Coach Taylor. I wondered if he heard every word. Tears welled in my eyes, clouding my sight. I excused myself as I passed him, and walked back to the waiting room. The team was quiet and looked up at me for answers.

"I'm leaving, maybe I'll get in a wreck and die so Joanne and Mitchell won't have the mistake to live with anymore. Apparently it's my fault he's here. It should've been me." I said before I walked out, ignoring every call from the guys.

Instead of driving, I began walking home. I grabbed my phone and dialed Tim's number. After two rings, he answered. "Bit?"

"Timâ€" I paused, "Will you come get me?"

"Where you at?"

"I'm on my way home. I'm at Harlow and Barton."

"Why the hell are you there?" He asked hotly.

"Because Tim. They wish it was me in that hospital bed. They want to know why it wasn't me. So, I left." I cried out angrily.

"I'll be right there. I'm at the hospital." He said as he crunk Loretta up. "Stay right there."

"Okay." I replied before I hung up. My phone started vibrating; the team was texting me, making sure I was okay and where I was. I sent a

group text saying that I was going to Tim's and I'd see everyone Saturday and I was okay. Right time Tim pulled up, Coach Taylor called me.

"Hey Coach." I said lowly as I shut the door.

"Hey Sweetheart, I'm sorry they said that. I heard every word." He started, "Can I talk to Tim?"

"Yes sir, and I'm sorry you had to hear that." I whispered as the tears fell down my cheeks. I handed the phone to Tim, then laid down in the seat, resting my head on his thigh. I closed my eyes, drowning out the one-sided conversation between Tim and Coach.

"Bit, we're at my house. Come on, let's go inside baby." Tim said as he gently shook me. I sat up sleepily and yawned. I wiped my eyes and looked at Tim, who had his hand out for me. I laid my head in his hand and scooted out his side. With a swift move, he picked me up and carried me in his house and to his room. He laid me on the bed and stood just watching me.

"I'm fine Tim." I whispered standing up and wrapping my arms around him. He wrapped his around me and kissed my head. "I need to go and get a shower?"

"Just use mine." He said, I furrowed my eyebrows and shrugged.

"You sure?" I wondered. "What about Tyra?"

"Of course I'm sure, go ahead. I'll run out and get our bags; you can sleep in my shirt. Don't worry about Tyra, I'll handle her. I'm not leaving you alone." He said squeezing me before he let go. I stood on my tip toes and kissed his chin. "I love you Lil' Bit."

"I love you Riggers." I replied, earning a smile from him. With one last kiss on the forehead, he turned and walked out the room. I walked into the bathroom and took a hot and quick shower. Twenty minutes later, I was in Tim's Panthers shirt, a pair of boy shorts and lying beside a clean Tim Riggins. He turned to his side and wrapped his arm around me tightly. I breathed in the body wash from his bare chest, then nuzzled my head.

"Everything is going to be fine."

"I hope so."

"It will, it has to be." He whispered shakily.

"It's not your fault. Please don't think it is." I whispered, looking up at him. His eyes were glossed over, a tear slipped out his eye. I brought my finger up and wiped the tear away. "It's not, Tim. I hate this happened to him, he may never get a chance to walk again. I wish I could take his place, I would in a heartbeat."

"Don't say that."

"But it's true. My parents were right; Bubba had a future with Notre Dame. I don't, I don't even have a plan. I don't know what I want to do with my future. I'll probably never get out of Dillon. He had it all." I whispered with tear falling out my eyes.

"Shh, calm down Lil' Bit." He said rolling on his back and pulling me on him. "Please don't ever say you wished it was you."

"But I do. My parents don't love me, Coach heard everything they said to me. They wished it was me, Jason is the golden child. I'm the black sheep. I have accepted it."

"You're more than that to me." He whispered, kissing my head. I simply nodded as the tears welled into my eyes even more. I sniffled and closed my eyes, letting Tim's heartbeat calm me down.

End  
file.